

**ACVFA Quarterly Meeting
May 10, 2000**

DETAILED REPORT

"Meeting the Challenge: Strategies for Gender Equality in International Development"

Welcome, William S. Reese, ACVFA Chair

ACVFA Chairman William S. Reese opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and restating the Committee's commitment to sustainable development. The Committee's mandate is to advise USAID and other parts of the U.S. government on foreign assistance and the link with non-governmental sectors. ACVFA dates from post-World War II and is a good example of a public-private partnership. ACVFA members are present as individuals, not as representatives of their organizations. They are unpaid and participate to distill ideas from the audience and make recommendations to USAID and others concerned with humanitarian assistance and sustainable development.

Mr. Reese then reintroduced Peggy Curlin as the ACVFA Vice Chair and welcomed the new members: Dr. Edwin Dorn, Dean of the LBJ School at the University of Texas-Austin, and Dr. David Roselle, President, University of Delaware. He also welcomed Judy Gilmore, the new PVC Director. He thanked the Gender Working Group subcommittee and acknowledged the support of the President's Inter-Agency Council on Women. Mr. Reese also recognized the large number of NGOs and the delegation of ministers from Africa in the audience.

"We've come a long way and are here to celebrate progress, achievements, and highlight gender issues," stated Mr. Reese. "We are also here to look at what remains to be done. We will survey the GPA and offer advice to USAID in the most constructive spirit." He reviewed the day's agenda (Attachment A) and then introduced USAID Administrator Ambassador J. Brady Anderson. Mr. Reese noted that, although Ambassador Anderson could not be present for the entire day, he would return for the evening reception and awards ceremony.

Opening Remarks: Ambassador J. Brady Anderson, USAID Administrator

Ambassador Anderson welcomed the audience and noted that he gave his "maiden talk" as the new USAID Administrator to ACVFA. He welcomed the new Committee members, Drs. Dorn and Roselle, and Jo Luck, President of Heifer Project International, who was unable to be present.

Ambassador Anderson remarked that USAID is involved in some very interesting and meaningful work with NGO partners. Together, NGOs and USAID are giving men and women the opportunity to improve their lives.

Ambassador Anderson noted that one of the most important aspects of his work as USAID Administrator is the Agency's relationship with the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of State. "It is good to be here at the State Department discussing this important topic," he said.

Noting that "Communication and transparency are important to us at USAID," Administrator Anderson reported that USAID was ranked first among 24 government agencies in an independent rating of the agencies' annual performance reports. USAID was rated highly for the transparency of its report and how well it communicated the Agency's story to the public. "ACVFA pointed out shortcomings and helped us improve our reporting," Ambassador Anderson said. "ACVFA also helps us in our relationship with NGOs, which is one of the most important relationship we have. ACVFA is very important to me and the Agency," he added.

"Near and dear to my heart is the role of women in development," said Ambassador Anderson. "A Chinese proverb states that women hold up half the sky. How can they hold up half the sky if they lack the tools they need, if they don't have respect? Women own only one-tenth of the world's property. In some places they cannot own property. This is not acceptable."

For many years, USAID has been committed to changing these conditions. After the UN Conference in Beijing in 1995, President Clinton created the Interagency Council on Women to ensure that the ideas generated at the conference were incorporated into federal agencies. This forced USAID to look at every sector and see its impact or potential impact on women.

The Agency seeks to improve economic opportunities for women. USAID is particularly proud of its microenterprise development program. In aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, microlenders are reaching more that 70,000 borrowers in El Salvador and Guatemala.

While on Capitol Hill yesterday, the Administrator talked to a U.S. Senator from out West who supported international development. He asked the senator how he could support international development--didn't he get grief from his constituents? The senator then recounted a story of a trip to Morocco, where he visited women who had been helped by microfinance loans. One woman made four cloths that cost her \$40 to make and sold them for \$60. This so impressed the senator that he now votes for foreign aid.

When in Honduras recently, Ambassador Anderson spoke to about 60 women who had received microenterprise loans. A woman told him her story of how she survived when Hurricane Mitch hit. She got her children out of the house in the middle of the night, and then rushed back to her house to rescue her stock of clothes that she had made with a microenterprise loan. Unfortunately, her stock was lost with the storm. She cried and wondered how she could repay the loan. Other women in her group helped her find a job as a hotel maid so she could pay back the loan. She was able to repay the loan and restart her business. She "overcame the catastrophe to rebuild her business." This story "shows hope for the future and for her entire community."

Administrator Anderson also spoke about the threats women face, such as trafficking. He noted that it might seem "unbelievable that we need to discuss this. Women are sold and used as sex slaves. USAID has organized public education campaigns, especially in Eastern Europe, to address this problem. A lot of the women are deceived, and they think they are

going to work in a job in another country. In the Ukraine, USAID set up a hotline that has received calls from the entire region. These are issues that we must continue to address and eliminate."

He stated that the single most important investment we can make is in education for women. A baby born to a woman with at least four years of primary education is twice as likely to survive as a baby born to a woman with no education. There has been some progress. Peru's President has shown a commitment to girls' education. In countries where USAID is located, significantly more girls are entering school. Providing a primary education to every girl and boy in every developing country would cost about \$7 billion a year for the next ten years. It is possible - while this may seem like an impossible amount of money, it doesn't seem so much when compared with the annual education budget for Fairfax County, a suburb of Washington, which is about \$1.3 billion.

Ambassador Anderson concluded with a statement about the many challenges facing us. He hoped that part of the Agency's legacy would be that women and young girls improve their lives around the world. And by improving their lives, the lives of boys and men are also improved.

Keynote address: "Globalization and Feminization: An Agenda for Gender and Development," Lincoln Chen, Vice President, Rockefeller Foundation

Dr. Chen stated that it was a great honor to speak at the meeting. Preparing for his talk today gave him the opportunity to review his career. He came to the gender issue through his work in Bangladesh. His talk centered on three major points:

"First, while recent decades have witnessed much progress on gender equality, globalization is fundamentally changing the playing field, introducing new threats as well as offering new opportunities. Second, I believe there is a 'feminization of globalization' that impinges on virtually all aspects of gender equality, including both the traditional sectors of development as well as introducing new dimensions. Third, just as the development community launched two earlier phases of gender equality strategies (special programs and mainstreaming), new strategies will be needed to harness the power of globalization for gender equality. These new strategies should not only advance gender and international development but also can help rebuild a vibrant constituency for America's overseas engagement."

The gender issue has come to the forefront in the 20th century. The 1973 Percy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act explicitly required America's aid program to consider its impact on women. The United States has been part of a global process—women's human rights are seen as part of all human rights. Dr. Chen cited the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The U.S. government has signed it but not ratified it. Nordic countries are far ahead. Other countries are making progress. He noted "Women deserve full human rights, with access to health, micro-enterprise programs, protection against violence, and civil

rights.” Women and men still live in unequal world. Doors to health and educational opportunities have been opened and the gaps are decreasing. However, doors to economic opportunities have barely opened. The development community can be proud that it has contributed to some of the advances.

In the 1970s, there was the "special program" phase – intellectual and policy work, when the Ford Foundation and others made important contributions to advance women in a variety of areas. Much of the work took place in the United States. There was a perception that gender studies were an export from North to South, although this is no longer an issue.

In the 1980s and 1990s, many agencies moved toward "mainstreaming" gender into programs and policies. There was a risk of loss of focus in changing context. Recent years have witnessed strategic debate about whether gender equality is better advanced by "women's programs" or "gender programs."

The forces of globalization are fundamentally changing the playing field. There are new threats and new opportunities. There is an increasing "global connectedness, not just of the economy, but of all aspects—politics, culture, human affairs—that is compressing time and distance. These extremely powerful forces are having an impact in three major dimensions:

1. Market privatization is leading to unequal growth; there is the labor force question as women are being incorporated into the lowest rung in the informal economy. Wholly invisible, home-based industries, and street vendors are often women. The feminine face of poverty may have worsened.
2. Amartya Sen wrote about how globalization may be disproportionately disadvantaging women. In some countries, girls are withdrawing from school because of economic hardship. In terms of health issues, new diseases; psycho-social issues—depression is a massive social health problem; women bear an increased burden; reform of health care system is increasingly market driven and excludes women.
3. Globalization is leading to new problems. "Commodification" of people – body parts, sex—is demeaning and a loss of dignity for people. Counter-cultural extremism is also a problem with the prohibitions against women among the Taliban in Afghanistan. In Vietnam, there is a return to certain "Confucian" values that accord women lower status and diminished value.

In the struggle for gender equality, there have been two steps forward and one step back. Many of these forces impact on both men and women, but many impact women more. However, we shouldn't see all global forces as negative.

How can we use these powerful forces so they can be more positive for gender equality?

1. The information revolution can involve horizontal networks that bring together shared interests and goals; NGOs represent a powerful force, especially if they

are linked to academics, the government, and the private sector. The formation of coalitions and alliances will add "muscularity" to gender equality.

2. In terms of the information and technology revolution, a lot more can be done; widespread availability of information can be used to help educate the public.
3. The reaffirmation of norms and values has led to greater transparency. There is a role for governing institutions in formalizing the positive trends toward inclusion of women in democratic processes and human rights.

The two organizations with which I am associated, Rockefeller and CARE, are thinking about these issues. As a CARE board member, I saw a recent "gender audit" that looked at the gender issue in terms of staff, programs, etc. CARE is making gender a priority.

In addition to helping overseas, gender and development can help strengthen the constituency for foreign aid. A recent unpublished study found two-thirds of U.S. women believe that we could do something useful overseas (more than the men); women express a preference for cooperative approaches. Women focus on peaceful strategies and the promotion of the culture of global caring. The women's "intensity of views" is much stronger than among men. These are issues that resonate among women.

Dr. Chen posited that gender equality would be achieved in the 21st century. This will mark an important milestone in history, as important as the abolition of slavery. Dr. Chen closed by stating that this is a human, political, and personal process for all of us.

Audience Discussion

ACVFA member Herschelle Sullivan Challenor asked about the implications of changing women's roles without changing men's roles. In developing countries, we've recognized that we need to speak to both men and women, but what about our own country?

Dr. Chen responded that he thinks very differently about gender issues now than he did when he was younger. He agreed that we need to involve both men and women. Family issues are difficult. There are some very powerful forces that influence relationships within a family, only some of which we understand fully. Family structure as we know it changed completely during the agricultural revolution.

ACVFA member Ted Weihe inquired about child-rearing practices, noting that men are much more engaged in child rearing. Is this a global trend?

Dr. Chen answered that this is particularly true of the industrialized world and not so much in the developing world, where men are under extraordinary pressure to find work.

ACVFA member Elise Smith thanked Dr. Chen for his provocative comments. She asked about integrating gender into organizations and how the Rockefeller Foundation is doing this.

Dr. Chen responded that the president of the foundation is committed to making these institutional changes, but it will take years, not days or months. Change must start at the top.

ACVFA member Jane Pratt asked if there was a systematic process of documenting “best practices” or examples within Rockefeller.

Dr. Chen said that they were now going through this process at Rockefeller. Traditionally, Rockefeller has been more technocratic and less-gender sensitive. Some other foundations, e.g., Ford and MacArthur, are perhaps more progressive on gender issues. UNDP and UNIFEM have begun a series of reports and reviews of global practices that perhaps will help in disseminating best practices. He said that Dr. Pratt made a good point. There was a wealth of experience, both successful and unsuccessful, that should be recorded.

A participant (president of the International Center for Research on Women - ICRW) asked if Dr. Chen would highlight policies or policy interventions that could support this “movement.” She was concerned that this as a movement could exist independent of policies.

Dr. Chen described it as a movement that is motivated by a social forces. It is a social change process.

Another participant (a representative of a Philippines NGO) raised issues about the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO has no gender agenda and no women in its decision-making structure. How are foundations such as Rockefeller addressing macroeconomic decision-making?

Dr. Chen replied that the WTO is a bit outside his area. But he wonders if there were a female majority in WTO, would outcomes be different and would there be a different perception of the WTO?

Panel on “Institutionalizing Gender Equality: Opportunities and Constraints”

Panelists: Theresa Loar, President’s Inter-Agency Council on Women, Moderator
James Michel, USAID
Anne Richard, U.S. Department of State
Mayra Buvinic, InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB)
Gita Gopal, World Bank

Mr. Reese introduced Theresa Loar as the Senior Coordinator for Women’s Issues in the U.S. government. Her position is the result of efforts by NGOs to obtain congressional approval for a position that represented women’s interests.

Ms. Loar highlighted the importance of mainstreaming gender into sectoral programs. She started as an advocate and now sees that her office acts as a policy consultant to different offices. She mentioned that she recognizes the value of partnerships. Repeating the term used by Dr. Chen, she said that partnerships and coalitions of NGOs could increase the “muscularity” of gender equality efforts. Ms. Loar also quoted from the research done by Joan Dunlop of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. More than

two-thirds of U.S. women believe that we can help women overseas. Ms. Loar cited the example of U.S. woman stepping forward to help women in Afghanistan.

Ms. Loar introduced the panel and thanked her USAID colleagues. She said the USAID-State Department partnership is very important.

Ambassador James Michel, USAID counselor, is a former chair of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and is a career foreign service officer.

Anne Richard directs the Office of Resources, Policy and Plans at the U.S. Department of State. Ambassador Albright recruited her back in to the State Department. Ms. Richard also served with the U.S. Peace Corps. **Mayra Buvinic**, Chief of Social Development at the IDB, is a special advisor on gender. She is from Chile and is a founding member of ICRW. **Gita Gopal**, Gender Coordinator, World Bank, worked in eastern Africa. She looks at the Bank's programs' impact on gender. Ms. Gopal is a lawyer with a law degree from Harvard University.

James Michel, USAID

Ambassador Michel said that there are many parallels between the evolution of USAID policies and practices and changes evident in the broader international context. This reflects, to some extent, the history of U.S. leadership and influence. He said that USAID needs public support to be an effective leader. "I've worked on gender issues in my various posts. Development is more likely to happen if all the people are engaged." While this seems to be a simple issue, there are a lot of complexities. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) adopted policies similar to those at USAID. In the 1980s there was a focus on incorporating women in development (WID) activities into donor programs. This was a donor-driven, "added-on" program approach rather than incorporating gender into the program. Development agencies are now trying to incorporate gender into their programs. They are looking at poverty reduction and the feminization of poverty. Guidelines and indicators have been developed.

Several characteristics of the effort by the DAC to encourage donors to implement the policies to which they agreed are relevant to improving our own national performance:

1. There was an explicit commitment by leaders (development ministers and aid agency heads) to a clearly articulated and effectively communicated policy.
2. A network of concerned individuals used practical instruments to share knowledge, experience, and best practices. Policies informed the debate.
3. Training was given to the Secretariat so its staff had an enhanced capacity to identify issues and frame actions.
4. There were processes in place for continuous reporting, monitoring and evaluation – especially through peer reviews and high-level oversight.

Ambassador Michel said, "When I returned to USAID last year, I was impressed by the extent to which a culture of results orientation had taken hold. This orientation is helping to institutionalize gender equality as an integral part of USAID's work."

Having gender built into the Agency's Strategic Framework and its key goals is important because it forms the basis for all programs. Reporting on gender is required. The database is starting to collect gender-disaggregated data. Gender is integrated into 80 strategic objectives of Bureaus and Missions.

The integration of gender is also evident in USAID's sectoral programs. The Latin America and Caribbean region (LAC) is working to give practical effect to the declaration on gender equality at the Summit of the Americas. The Africa Bureau is doing capacity strengthening of women and women's organizations. The Europe and Eurasia Bureau has a new strategy statement that integrates gender throughout in order to ensure that its programs promote equal access and opportunities, equal rights and equal protection under the law.

Ambassador Michel concluded, "I am pleased to see the current Administrator taking a strong role. We are well positioned to demonstrate gender equality as a worthy goal and as an essential factor for sustainable development."

Anne Richard, U.S. Department of State

Anne Richard commended Theresa Loar as one of the foremost experts in gender in the federal government. She shares Theresa's enthusiasm for this issue. Ms. Richard is working to see that the State Department integrates gender into its planning process, which involves missions, bureaus, and local programs. She is focusing currently on two priorities: trafficking in women and women's political participation. Ms. Richard involved Ms. Loar in reviewing the Bureau's plans. This process led to incorporating gender concerns into existing structures, rather than creating something new in the bureaus. Piggybacking upon what was already in place was an important ingredient of success. In the Europe Bureau, for example, there are coordinated programs in Ukraine and Poland to inform women as to the dangers of trafficking. There are similar programs in Bosnia as trafficking in women is associated with post-war issues. Vital Voices is another example. These efforts were started with small amounts of seed money from Ms. Richard's office to the President's Interagency Council and the bureaus. They were spurred on by strong leadership.

Ms. Richard enumerated the key ingredients for success:

- Commitment of a top leader;
- Incorporation of the gender activity as part of the regular workload, not an add-on;
- Application of some additional resources (seed money);
- Better tools to track resources and pull them together;
- Incentives to reward and promote the people who do this well;
- Evolution of a new outlook at the State Department that cultural issues are foreign policy issues.

While gender integration may not yet be comprehensive across the State Department, the important thing, Ms. Richard stated, is that there are models for how it can be done.

Mayra Buvinic, IDB

Mayra Buvinic commended ACVFA for keeping the issue alive and urged the Committee to continue to view it as a high priority. She remarked that the Vital Voices activity in Uruguay was very successful and is having a wider impact than anticipated. Regarding the Bank's programming, there are operational and structural issues in mainstreaming gender issues, she noted. The Bank has made some progress in integrating gender into traditional

lending areas and into new areas, and into reimbursable funding modalities – going from grants to loans. Interestingly, the most gains have been made in incorporating gender into new programs, while progress in the traditional areas has been slower. The biggest challenge is going from grants to loans that invest in women.

Ms. Buvinic provided some details on the three dimensions of mainstreaming:

1. Advancement into new areas: for example, criminal violence in societies was ignored up until three or four years ago. Then the IDB made the conceptual bridge between domestic and street violence. Domestic violence is one of the high risk factors for street violence. The Bank brought together those concerned about both areas. They started programs in Uruguay and the Dominican Republic. There is an openness to new ideas. Once learning is achieved, it's more difficult to make room for new ideas. It's harder to change an existing "blueprint."
2. Including or not including gender in the Bank's traditional portfolio depends on the nature of the loans. It is difficult, for example, to break patterns in agricultural loans. The Bank must work on its own staff, as well as that of its borrowers, to include gender in project design and implementation.
3. Going from grants to women to loans that invest in women: This is still at the design stage and is the biggest challenge.

The IDB needs to achieve behavioral change in its U.S. and overseas staff. The Bank needs to provide training and hire more people with expertise. It needs to convince the borrowing countries to provide loan incentives to women borrowers. With regard to the concept of assistance to women vs. investment in women, some borrowing countries feel that investment in women isn't a priority. There is a disincentive to borrowing to invest in women because of the high transaction costs.

Some potential solutions:

1. Show the high economic and social benefits of investing in women, especially in the area of mitigating domestic violence. The Bank did a study on violence and showed the economic impact of violence against women, e.g., Chile loses 2 percent of its GDP as a result of domestic violence.
2. Support advocacy in borrowing countries to push women's agenda.
3. Reduce the transaction cost for borrowers and users.

Gita Gopal, World Bank

Gita Gopal welcomed three gender ministers and members of the Ministry of Justice from Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda who were in the audience. She said that a lot of what Mayra Buvinic talked about also exists at the World Bank. She questioned if the focus was on gender or women. "We may need gender analysis in planning, but we must examine the emphasis on women. The World Bank is evaluating gender policy. Since 1984, every

program has had to look at activities that may have a negative impact on women." Since 1994, the Bank has been required to assist countries in ensuring that their development policies have an equitable impact on women and men. The Country Assistance Strategy must reduce gender disparity and increase women's participation in economic development.

The World Bank is in Phase I of its evaluation (still in draft form). There has been enormous progress, with 38 percent of projects including gender issues, and 28 percent with gender action plans. Almost 75 percent of country assistance strategies reflect consideration of gender. Gender and mainstreaming are difficult issues in terms of resources, tools, and policies. Women's empowerment is the single most important issue for some countries, such as Kenya.

In terms of globalization, HIV/AIDS is changing the nature of balance of power within households in Africa. Often World Bank assistance is supply-driven, not demand-driven. Ms. Gopal noted that it is important to be cautious in applying issues of gender equality because they have not been thoroughly thought out at the grassroots level. She also questioned the impact of donor assistance on men and women and stated that, without knowing this, we cannot move forward. She is looking to other donors as to how to measure results on gender issues.

Audience Discussion

Mr. Reese stated that because of lack of time, questions would be answered in the breakout sessions. Each session was to report back to the main forum at the end of the afternoon.

USAID Gender Plan of Action Assessment Presentation

Elise Fiber Smith, Chair, ACVFA Gender Working Group
Ambassador Sandy Vogelgesang, President, Everest Associates

Elise Smith opened the session and noted that moving ahead on equity, equality, and gender is difficult both inside and outside of USAID. She stressed the collaborative relationship between ACVFA and USAID in developing the Gender Plan of Action. Together they identified interventions at critical points in USAID's operations where they could have an impact: procurement, personnel, incentives, and monitoring and evaluation. Ms. Smith noted the forthcoming United Nations Beijing Plus Five meetings and the importance of making women's voices heard on the Hill, through the efforts of

organizations such as Women's Edge. She introduced Ambassador Vogelgesang, a career diplomat who served as Ambassador to Nepal, received three presidential awards, and now heads a trade and investment organization.

Ambassador Vogelgesang described some of the faces and voices she encountered in her field visits: the Mayan farmer in Chichicastenango lost everyone in his family during Guatemala's long civil war and still fears for his life; the mother dying of HIV/AIDS in Kampala who is helping develop "memory books" for Uganda's almost two million orphans, so that they will have something to help them remember their parents; the feisty female lawyer debating Islamic fundamentalists in a Forum for Feminine Solidarity in Casablanca, Morocco, and the bright-eyed young student in an Egyptian village, full of enthusiasm because she is learning to read and write.

ACVFA requested an independent assessment of the Gender Plan of Action (GPA). The Gender Plan of Action was issued by then Administrator Brian Atwood in 1996, with the strong support of ACVFA. The purpose of the GPA was to institutionalize concern about both women and men (gender equality) into all Agency operations through requirements on policy, personnel, procurement, performance monitoring, and evaluation.

She noted that ACVFA asked the study team to find out what action had been taken on the GPA and what USAID should do next on the GPA and more generally to promote gender equality. The team was asked to reflect the views of those interviewed and surveyed and to provide "options for dialogue," rather than specific recommendations.

The Study findings are based on over 500 interviews with USAID and other U.S. Government staff, other donors, PVO/NGO leaders, host government officials, leaders and "customers" in countries where USAID operates, a literature review, a survey of all USAID Missions, field studies in Morocco, Guatemala, and Uganda and a short visit to Egypt.

The study found that actions have been taken, and impressive achievements have been made in requirements that incorporate gender sensitivity into scopes of work for contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants. But follow-up on some important GPA recommendations was incomplete or pending.

There were a number of obstacles to the follow up on the GPA. Communication was a factor. Less than five percent of the people interviewed had heard of the GPA. The mid 1990s when the GPA was implemented, was a period of great turmoil for USAID with big budget cuts, downsizing, and reengineering.

Over ninety percent of those interviewed in USAID and PVO/NGO community said that the GPA has had no measurable impact on Agency operations. However, USAID employees said that they had been working on gender equality for a long before the GPA. Many of those interviewed and surveyed think that it is too soon to make a definitive judgment on the GPA since some recommendations, such as those on procurement, were acted on recently and action is pending on others.

USAID employees criticized what they consider the "checklist approach to change."

PVO interviewees attributed more importance to using institutional tools to change organizational culture. USAID employees probably underestimated the potential value of some of the GPA's recommendations and PVO representatives overestimated the potential for Agency buy-in at that time in USAID history.

Far more important than the findings on one institutional initiative were the findings on what the people interviewed and surveyed think that USAID should do overall to promote gender equality.

On the process side - that is, how can the Agency promote gender equality through changes in its organization and through outreach to other parts of the U.S. Government, the American public, other donors, the PVO community, and its own "customers" in the field? Many questions emerged, including: What organizational structure to use inside USAID to promote gender equality?

Options ranged from closing down what some called the "WID police," to strengthening the office and changing its name to reflect less focus on women and more on gender equality.

Many Mission Directors said that additional funding (perhaps a special fund) would help win staff buy-in for gender equality or respond to new targets of opportunity. Others underscored the larger Agency funding problem or said that past efforts to use special funds have failed.

They offered suggestions on how USAID could expand outreach on gender equality to: U.S. Congress, business community and U.S. women's organizations (PVO's (Professional Exchange Program - bring two cultures together) USAID "Customers"

On the Program side, that is, what issues should USAID select for greater emphasis in its policies and programs? People raised a number of general strategic questions: Should USAID become a much more assertive agent for change? Some said it is wrong to challenge status quo. Others said that there is no choice, since achieving gender quality requires a fundamental transformation of society.

What about USAID's focus on countries? Some said to capitalize on those where there is special opportunity to make impact, such as Morocco, a modern Muslim nation with a new King.

Should there be more attention to regional and global concerns? One gender consultant pointed out the potential payoff for USAID Guatemala if its next regional plan for Central America were to include concern for gender equality in trade and environment programs.

Must there be tradeoffs between questions of basic survival such as maternal mortality rates or issues of empowerment such as land ownership or divorce? USAID/CEDPA programs in Egypt combine survival with empowerment objectives.

Should there be a shift from traditional issues (such as reproductive health, literacy, and micro-finance), to questions such as the impact of conflict or societies in transition on gender equality? This is a key question for USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau leadership that has just launched an important campaign to underscore attention to gender concerns in Europe and Eurasia.

How can the Agency best address demographic and generational challenges?

Should there be greater attention to people in mega-cities, versus rural villages? (Spend more time in Cairo with its almost 18 million people, versus small villages in southern Egypt?)

Should there be more focus on the generational challenge from the young (largest cohort of adolescents hitting child-bearing and working years) or older population (proportion of people over 65 to double by 2045)? (Models are provided by USAID Guatemala and USAID/Rabat where teen clubs meet on sex education and HIV/AIDS and take messages to countryside)

Many raised specific issues related to Agency strategic goals:

Economic growth

- Economic tools are by far the most important for promoting gender equality. The theory of gender equality may be great but, at the end of the day, money matters most. More support is needed for USAID programs on economic growth.
- More emphasis is needed on product design and selection and marketing in micro-enterprise projects. USAID Guatemala has found that testing the market before investing in training saves time, money and frustration for all concerned and leads to more income generation and job creation.
- Move beyond preeminent focus on micro-finance and enterprise to more attention to macroeconomic issues. A good example of a macroeconomic approach is USAID Kampala's work with women's parliamentary groups on a "Gender Budget."

Democracy and governance

Although women make up at least half the population in every country, their representation in decision-making bodies is under 20 percent. Thus, most interviewees recommended:

- More funding for democracy programs that reflect gender equality.
- More attention to human rights issues and situations of conflict in this field. At least one woman in every three around the world beaten or abused -- frequently by a member of her own family.
- A model for response is the work of USAID Guatemala in galvanizing donor community in Guatemala City to address rampant violations of human rights, especially abuse of Ladino and indigenous women.

Human capacity building through education and training

- The three missions chosen for project field study were selected largely because of their emphasis on girls' primary education. As successful as focus on primary schooling has been, many USAID colleagues in three posts recommended moving from preeminent emphasis on primary education, to more focus on secondary school opportunities for boys and girls and more focus on vocational/technical training.

Population, health and nutrition

Recommendations included the following:

- Increased outreach to men on family planning and HIV/AIDS. In Uganda, USAID has used different approaches for women and men.
- More integrated programs for men and women combining health, literacy, and employment. There is a great program in Fes, Morocco that combines all three. The Mission should share that approach and superb curriculum with others.
- Greater outreach to grass roots level is needed. Despite all the advances in medical science, complications from pregnancy and childbirth remain the leading killer of women in developing countries, with one woman dying every minute every day. A model of this type of approach is USAID Guatemala's effort to get to the "choke-point" in terms of maternal mortality -- namely, untrained midwives.

Environment

- There is a need for more gender sensitivity in community projects. For example, in Nepal: women are often main managers of natural resources, yet relegated to back of the room; USAID Kathmandu found it could achieve more sustained impact when it engaged women separately and then linked their involvement with income generation.

What next?

The findings provide the basis -- indeed, indicate the urgent need for -- a seven-point program on gender equality, as follows:

1. Demonstration of clear consistent Agency leadership in Washington and the field

The senior leadership of USAID must "walk the talk" -- with vision, commitment built on consensus inside the organization, adequate resources and training, and clear accountability.

2. Commitment to change

USAID needs to act as more assertive agent for change, using approaches that are more comprehensive in impact, more integrated and more innovative.

3. Funding

Money matters. The U.S. must spend more money on bilateral and multilateral development assistance.

The U.S. spends the lowest percentage of GNP of any donor (less than one-tenth of one percent) and less than half of the proportion it spent ten years ago.

Serious promotion of gender equality will require more money overall for USAID or reallocation of resources within Agency, or both.

One proposal: institution of a Gender Equality Fund to help foster USAID innovation and responsiveness in the field.

4. Commitment to organizational change

The Agency's new policy on gender equality should reflect balance between USAID and PVO views on organizational or institutional change.

USAID should incorporate the highest-priority unfinished GPA business (such as gender-integrated training) into its new organizational strategy for gender equality.

That strategy should include a Senior Management Team to promote gender equality, supported by a stronger, more technically oriented Office of Gender Equality.

5. Expanded outreach to promote gender equality

Increased USG coordination (especially State/USAID resource planners)

Special outreach to U.S. women's organizations

Increased dialogue with USAID "customers"

More donor coordination (especially incorporation of gender issues on donors' national policy reviews)

6. Shift to greater focus on program

One Agency senior manager summed up the consensus: "We need to move beyond fixing systems and get a handle, not so much on process, but on programs."

New substantive priorities

The new Agency policy should focus on such strategic questions as how to:

Address new targets of opportunity or need in key countries.

Put greater emphasis on regional/global issues.
Increase focus on the mega-cities of the developing world.
Reach the largest cohort of adolescents in world history.

That new Agency policy should also focus on such program issues, related to Agency Strategy, as how to emphasize:

Economic programs as the most critical means to advance gender equality

Vocational education as the most cost-effective investment in that regard.

In conclusion, the Agency can make a significant difference for women and men in developing nations. USAID, supported by ACVFA, can and should develop "A New Agenda for Gender Equality" for 2000 and beyond!

Discussion

Question: Women remain grossly underrepresented in U.S. House and Senate and state legislatures. How do you reconcile U.S. foreign policy with what is happening domestically?

Response: We must build a constituency for foreign aid. The U.S. public is ready to respond. We need active outreach.

Question: Domestic violence is a big issue in the Near East and Southeast Asia. Would a regional focus help ameliorate the situation?

Response: Regional approaches can help. Missions in the region can help address regional issues to highlight invisible victims. They can draw on cooperative partnerships and put a collective spotlight on issues.

Question: Is it better to use gender norms in individual programs, or make gender an overall strategic policy?

Response: The general consensus was that it may be appropriate to have gender as a strategic objective, but that it's better to integrate gender equality into sustainable development programs.

Panel: Committing Resources to Advance Gender Equality

Panelists:

Thomas H. Fox, Assistant Administrator for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC), USAID, Moderator
Bradford Smith, Ford Foundation (invited, but was unable to attend)
Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck, Soros Foundation
Shira Saperstein, The Moriah Fund, (substituting for Mary Ann Stein)

Ms. Peggy Curlin introduced the panel and the topic of gender equality and U.S. foundations. She commended Tom Fox's support for gender issues. Tom Fox has

stated that it is “not women in development, but women are development.” As the Assistant Administrator for PPC, he looks at how policy is made and implemented in USAID. He also spent five years as president of the U.S. Council on Foundations.

Mr. Fox stated, "This is a particularly useful panel as it considers how foundations can strengthen their commitment to ensure that women are development." He then introduced the panelists. Bradford Smith is a vice president of the Ford Foundation; he has a strong background in Latin America. Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck is the Director of

the Women's Network at the Soros Foundation and a visiting professor at Swarthmore College. She focuses on the role of women in society. Shira Saperstein is representing the Moriah Fund, a relatively new foundation committed to international programs, environment/peace, and justice/gender equity.

Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck thanked ACVFA for inviting her to speak. In 1990, she set up the Moscow Center for Gender Studies. The Center has a strong feminist agenda. She knows what it's like to work in an NGO. She began her work at Soros three years ago. Soros works with national foundations in the former Soviet Union, South Africa, Guatemala, and other countries. Her work focuses on the former Soviet countries. The Soros program had to create relationships with national foundations to make gender studies an integral part of their program, as their own initiative, not imposed by Soros USA. In 1997, the Soros program began in Albania and Poland with distinct women's programs. Other Soros programs didn't have separate women's programs and needed support. Soros created a number of different programs for the region. These included:

1. Women's human rights program – post-Beijing, women didn't have an opportunity to participate internationally. Soros supports women with advocacy. Women's Law in Development was its partner. Soros gave the program computers and Internet connections.
2. Violence Against Women including trafficking in women and children.
3. Women in Education.

Shira Saperstein, Program Director, Women's Rights and Reproductive Health, Moriah Fund, explained how the foundation's reproductive health program grew to include women's rights. It is a relatively small foundation with a focus on advocacy and policy including controversial issues where the government cannot provide support. The foundation also focuses on women of color in the USA and women overseas who are doubly burdened by class or ethnicity.

Mr. Fox asked if the foundations were creating a culture that promotes mainstreaming gender.

Ms. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck reported that, in 1997, Soros invited the Ford and Eurasia foundations and other foundations to initial meetings to educate national groups that

gender is a normal part of programs, not just a socialist idea. As a result of these meetings, national groups are now creating their own programs. There has been an increase in funding from \$2.2 million in 1998 to \$3.9 million in 1999.

Ms. Saperstein noted that there is a problem of the number of issues to be covered, but that the foundation has achieved some understanding of looking at its programs through the “gender lens.”

Mr. Fox asked how the organizations were using evaluation to ensure gender equity in their programs. He asked if they'd had any successes and what they expected of their grantees.

Ms. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck said that this is an evaluation year for Soros, from July to December 2000. They need to look at programmatic success and how many people share the value of women's empowerment.

Ms. Saperstein expressed an interest in learning which organizations are developing indicators to measure women's progress. She said it is difficult to measure this over time.

Mr. Fox asked how the development community could prod USAID in this area.

Ms. Saperstein replied that it was essential that there be non-government funding sources. Foundations can provide advocacy, independent evaluations of USAID programs, and hold USAID accountable to its own rhetoric.

Ms. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck agreed that it was necessary for non-government sources to provide funding. It is good to have a variety of funding support, but the groups should use the funds to implement the foundation's agenda.

Ms. Curlin stated that a problem was whether to do extensive evaluations that take away from program implementation. CEDPA has experimented with participatory evaluations and found that it was important to ask people/stakeholders how to plan a gender-sensitive program.

Audience Discussion

ACVFA member Elise Smith mentioned the fact that there seem to be very few foundations that focus on women and/or gender. She asked if there were a way to address this and what the role of PVOs was.

Ms. Saperstein said that there are a limited number of foundations that focus on international development. Fewer still within that group focus on women. It is not possible to work on increasing the number that have a women's program, and it was better to have them support gender within existing programs. The Moriah Fund looks for grantees to introduce this concept through grant proposals.

Ms. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck stated that PVOs should look for opportunities to build the capacity of foundations/organizations within the country and the international community will then look to them to work with women.

Ms. Saperstein suggested that ACVFA support the concept of intermediary grant-making facilities. This is a way to get money out where foundations don't have offices. These should be medium-sized grants (greater than \$10K) and ensure that these organizations get capacity-building support.

ACVFA member Dr. William Fuller inquired into the role of creativity in program design.

Ms. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck stated that boldness helps get things done and move ideas forward with a vision. Flexibility is important when working with foundations. As an example, she cited the Soros Foundation's ability to create emergency programs in response to crises in CEE/NIS.

Ms. Saperstein said that there is a desire to focus more narrowly, be proactive, and use a direct approach. Women's Edge, for example, is looking at trade issues and their impact on women. The Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Committee publicized women's rights issues. On women's health issues, there have been evaluations on the impact of USAID's health program in Guatemala, Mexico, and India. The Global Fund for Women gives small grants to NGOs. CEDPA's International Women's Health Program provides training and management for NGOs to build capacity in health care policy and economic reform.

ACVFA member Lou Mitchell followed up on Bill Fuller's question on impact and asked for examples of achievements, even if anecdotal.

Ms. Saperstein mentioned support to organizations for the Cairo conference. This marked a "sea change in how the world related to women's health and development." As another example, women's human rights groups publicized rape during conflict so that it became prosecuted through the international judicial process.

Ms. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck mentioned that the 1997 conference did not include trafficking in women. Soros brought in speakers and a videotape to highlight the issue. It began to make a difference in terms of the awareness of the issue among women. The education program in the Ukraine is now going to be adopted by other countries. In terms of the extent and quality of the contribution of women from the NIS, this will be seen in their increased participation in Beijing + 5.

ACVFA member Dr. Edwin Dorn asked about management training, specifically, how much effort was being put into training people to use resources effectively and through evaluation.

Ms. Saperstein stated that organizations need to build their organizational capacity, but her Fund gets so many proposals for training that she wonders about the organizations' priorities. How can organizations develop priorities in this area?

Ms. Curlin stated that training needs to be linked to a series of events to build capacity of an organization over time. Initial training is to "get to know the issues." Next, you must build capacity. You need to link training to services so that you know it's effective.

Ms. Lucy Atkins, New York International Planned Parenthood Federation, (formerly a Senior Program Officer for the Ford Foundation in Mexico City), spoke about the institutionalization of gender issues and importance of leadership and institutionalization at the Ford Foundation. Ford uses a "Diversity Table" that lists the number of people/women/men/minorities within the organization. The women's program forum is an internal informal mechanism to bring women and gender issues to the table for discussion within the foundation and related organizations. There was a concern that gender would "disappear." Its Brazil office set up an incentive fund for projects that put gender in the forefront of their program. In last few years, Ford has instituted a more systematic approach to "benchmarks," for example, asking grantees to decide how they want to be evaluated.

This allows the foundation to build in indicators from the program's start. They are also distinguishing between process and qualitative indicators.

A participant asked if this community is trying to pull multinationals into international development.

Ms. Posadskaya-Vanderbeck said the Soros Foundation was shifting from former socialist countries to becoming more global with South Africa and western Africa initiatives. The foundation's leadership requested that national boards be either part of women's movements or know about the issues so that the programs would be gender-inclusive.

A participant mentioned that the Council on Foundations just had its annual meeting and asked if its agenda included themes focused on international issues.

Ms. Helen Seidler, formerly with the Council on Foundations, said the themes were "Transforming Philanthropy and Organizing for Results." She said the environment for foundations is changing. There are more public-private partnerships and lots of international content in the annual meeting.

Mr. Fox reviewed some of the points made during the panel discussion, including the need to provide grants greater than \$10,000, the importance of the intermediary organization in service delivery and monitoring and evaluation, and the symbiotic relationship between PVOs and foundations. He then thanked the speakers.

At this point, the participants broke into four working groups for further discussion. The notes from each breakout group are Attachment B.

Plenary Session: Reports from Break-out Groups: Strategies to Elevate Gender Equality as a National and International Priority

GROUP 1

Facilitator: Kathryn Welford, ACVFA Member

Rapporteur: Herschelle Sullivan Challenor, ACVFA Member

This group focused on the strategies that USAID might employ to move ahead on gender equality and suggestions for USAID on transforming policy and programs.

The group discussed survival issues versus strategic/empowerment issues, agreeing that sometimes the latter comes from the former. The group recommended that USAID recognize integrated approaches and provide funding and incentives for collaboration across sectors. The group also recognized the importance of: a thriving grassroots community in country; democracy; access to funds for women; strategic opportunities for local NGOs; and working with the U.S. Congress.

Their recommendations for USAID included:

- Before designing a new program, conduct a needs assessment to highlight gender issues
- Examine gender participation in light of the constraints within the results framework
- Work with NGOs to do a better job in linking gender issues and poverty/economic hardship
- Support a better enabling environment around gender issues
- Work to achieve the ability to influence policies of others in the local/national context
- Build links to local organizations
- Respect the national context.

GROUP 2

Facilitator and Rapporteur: Robert Chase, ACVFA Member

This group focused on how to mainstream gender. Participants stressed the need to understand the local context before promoting gender equality and the need to involve program participants at the grassroots level. Also, participants suggested that the WID Office needs to become more of a technical advisory group for USAID. Also recommended was using program incentives to motivate people to change within organizations. Others suggested that it was important to keep working on coalitions on women's issues to keep these issues at the forefront.

Other suggestions included:

- Use of grassroots groups and their ability to minimize violence against women
- Cross-sectoral cooperation – get women's groups interested in the environment, for example
- Convince men that gender equality is important
- Consider using in-country training rather than more expensive US-based training with expatriates.

The group had no comments on the Gender Plan of Action (GPA) assessment and next steps.

To get institutional buy-in into a GPA, the group suggested:

- Not adding another checklist or condition onto funding
 - Using incentives
 - Encourage thinking “outside the box”
 - Set up an inter-divisional task force to monitor weaving gender issues into program design
 - Encourage division staff interest
 - Hire staff who are already committed to gender issues
 - Provide additional funds to staff to buy-in to programs that address gender issues
 - Pick model sectors with the best chance of success
-
- Provide staff training
 - Establish an internal audit unit that examines gender
 - Establish thematic/bridging linkages

Program priorities included:

- Going beyond primary education to promote technical/vocational training
- With the HIV/AIDS epidemic, give greater emphasis to need for primary education for girls
- Develop qualitative indicators.

GROUP 3

Facilitator and Rapporteur: Jane Pratt, ACVFA Member

This group focused on responding to three questions:

1. What to do about improving gender equality
2. How to do it and defining an enabling environment, and
3. How to get results and keep the momentum going.

In terms of the three issues, the group suggested that USAID focus on the following:

How to get results and keep the momentum going:

- Get the media involved and go beyond "sound bites" to deeper issues
- Put the issue on the agenda for national/international dialogue
- Support and disseminate a “Best/Good Practices” in gender report
- Promote having a communications/public relations officer within each agency and PVO to meet the “hunger for information”
- Link global and domestic agendas
- Make allies and alliances
- Insist on visible commitment from leadership
- Create a supportive policy framework
- Provide incentives for the staff in USAID and at PVOs to act

How to do it:

- Identify community needs and develop indicators
 - Replicate existing models for best practices
 - Provide technical assistance and training for PVO and USAID staff to promote women's participation
 - Promote access for women
 - Promote linkages with partners and with the domestic agenda
 - Maintain the current gender office and mainstream gender concerns
 - Design gender programs so that they are more inclusive and non-threatening to men
-
- Refuse to accept the "lack of money" as an excuse for inaction
 - Ask all donors to leverage funds to integrate gender in all proposals
 - Give systemic support/administration/training

What to do/program content:

- Survey best practices to capture and document model programs
- Target issues of importance to women such as vulnerability, health, and education issues
- Look for fair and safe opportunities
- Accept the legitimacy of development interventions trying to affect cultural change where needed to address gender issues; USAID and the PVO community should be agents for change
- Establish an information clearinghouse for recommendations
- Identify where there are gaps, look for complementarities and reduce duplication, and target activities to effect change.

GROUP 4

Facilitator: Lou Mitchell, ACVFA Member

Rapporteur: Susan Cox, ACVFA Member

This group focused their comments on how best to incorporate gender issues into development programs.

Recommendations for USAID included:

- Recognize that cultural nuances are important for program design
- Go to citizens for input and make them accountable
- Help local women's NGOs participate in exchange
- Develop people's resources
- Collaborate with other parties
- Import field knowledge to decision-making
- Local leaders need to own the process
- Mobilize the community

The group also noted its concern about small amount of funding available (\$10 million/year) for the WID office. It was suggested that WID act as a technical resource for other offices and bureaus within USAID, rather than have its own programs.

Closing Remarks: William S. Reese, ACVFA Chairman

Mr. Reese thanked Subcommittee Chair, Elise Smith and ACVFA Vice Chair, Peggy Curlin and their committee for their work and leadership on the GPA. He said this was "the richest agenda, largest gathering that we've had in a number of years." He also thanked Theresa Loar, co-sponsor, Noreen O'Meara, ACVFA Director, all speakers, and others who had contributed and gave their time. He then closed the session by inviting people to the awards ceremony.